



CEPPS/NDI Quarterly Report: May – June 2005

UGANDA: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND OUTREACH USAID Associate Cooperative Agreement No. 617-A-00-04-00002

Project Dates: May 2005 – June 2006

I. SUMMARY

Uganda has operated under a “no-party” system since President Yoweri Museveni came to power in 1986. Although Uganda has held elections four times over the last decade, these have been conducted in an environment that has suppressed political opposition to President Museveni’s National Resistance Movement (NRM), also referred to as “the Movement” system, thereby restraining opportunities for genuine political decisionmaking on the part of Ugandan citizens. In January 2003, President Museveni began publicly discussing opening space to allow political parties to operate openly. A series of legal reforms that have taken place in Uganda over the last year further suggest that the 2006 elections could represent the first time that Ugandan citizens will have an opportunity to vote in competitive multi-party elections in nearly two decades.

Against this political backdrop, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) program in Uganda aims to support political pluralism by increasing political participation and outreach. Specifically, the program seeks to increase the capacity of parliamentary caucuses to present issues to parliament and the electorate, encourage women’s participation at all stages of the electoral process and develop their skills as candidates, assess the capacity of civil society organizations (CSOs) to conduct election monitoring, and assist CSOs to broaden citizen participation in anticipation of the elections.

During this reporting period, the Institute opened its Kampala office and completed all of the administrative tasks related to this activity. Additionally, the Institute began conducting an assessment of CSO capacity to conduct electoral activities and began drafting a strategy document on increasing the political participation of women. NDI has also begun working individually with members of parliamentary caucuses to begin the planning for issue roundtables.

In the coming quarter, NDI plans to continue working with members of parliament (MPs) to determine topics and initiate logistical planning for roundtable discussions. The Institute also plans to begin soliciting proposals for its subgrants programs and to conduct the training series

for both women's and the civic/voter education programs. A report on the CSO assessment, which summarizes findings and recommendations, will also be finalized in the next quarter.

II. BACKGROUND

Since gaining independence from the British in 1962, Uganda experienced two brutal dictatorships and prolonged civil war, which pitted ethnic and religious groups against one another. When President Yoweri Museveni came to power in 1986, one of his first acts was to ban political parties – the organizations thought to be responsible for the country's violent and unstable history. He established the NRM or "the Movement," to which every Ugandan is a member from birth. Under the Movement system, political candidates run for elected office as individuals, rather than representatives of political parties. As outlined in President Museveni's blueprint for Uganda's future, "Sowing the Mustard Seed," the "no-party" arrangement was designed to be temporary. However, 18 years after its introduction, the Movement system remained in place, making Uganda a *de-facto* one-party state.

In January 2003, President Museveni publicly discussed the possibility of lifting restrictions on parties. This was followed by a proposal from the Movement leadership to recognize the Movement system itself as a political party and to expand political space by lifting the ban on other political parties. Around the same time, the Ugandan Constitutional Court declared that the Movement was actually a political party, and that many restrictions on political parties were unconstitutional. In addition, a Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) was established to make recommendations on necessary constitutional amendments in order for the country to have competitive, political pluralism in the coming years. However, the government has maintained that the Ugandan populace should have the final decision on whether or not the country will return to multiparty rule.

Thus, the Electoral Commission (EC) has moved forward with plans for a July 28 referendum that will determine the political future of Uganda. The recent release of an *Afrobarometer* survey has supported concerns regarding the narrow margin between those who want to retain the Movement system and those who support a return to multipartyism. Although the survey revealed that 51 percent of Ugandans support the move toward multipartyism, there was a 2 percent margin of error, which essentially negates the gap between the two sides on this issue. Additionally, the survey showed that the largest support for multipartyism was in areas that traditionally have the lowest voter turnout, the north and the east. However, the president, as well as other prominent Movement politicians, has come out openly supporting the move towards multipartyism, including participating in the Electoral Commission's civic education efforts. Even though all of the opposition parties and a large percentage of the bigger CSOs have boycotted the referendum, the EC has tried to work cooperatively with members of civil society to develop the referendum question as well as the symbols that will represent each side. The pro-multiparty side has chosen a tree as its symbol and the pro-Movement side has chosen a red house.

After several efforts by opposition MPs to block the vote on the lifting of presidential term limits, the parliament voted overwhelmingly in favor of repealing term limits, as part of the third Constitutional Amendment Bill that would amend the 1995 constitution to allow President

Museveni to contest in the 2006 elections. The initial Omnibus Constitutional Amendment Bill had earlier been separated into smaller bills to ensure that parliament would be able to pass necessary legislation well in advance of the 2006 elections. During the first reading, the final vote was 232 in favor of lifting the term limits, 50 against and one abstention. The motion required a two-thirds majority in parliament (196 votes). Following this move, the amendment will now be referred to the committee level, where each clause will be considered individually. Once moving through the committee process, the final stage will be a third reading of the bill before parliament and a final vote. This vote was one of the first tests of the open voting system adopted recently by parliament. The *New Vision* and *The Daily Monitor* both published a list of how each MP voted on the bill, as well as who was absent during the vote.

While the parliamentary vote was taking place, an anti-third term rally outside of the parliament building turned violent, resulting in the arrest of several people as well as the impounding of multiple vehicles. The police used tear-gas and water cannons to disperse the crowd. Amid growing concerns regarding increasing political tension and allegations of intimidation in the lead-up to the 2006 elections, opposition MPs requested that Speaker of Parliament Edward Ssekandi provide additional security for all MPs. The Speaker is currently considering the implications of approving the request.

Within this context, NDI's program aims to support Uganda's transition toward multiparty democracy by increasing political participation and outreach. Although momentum appears to be building in support of amending the constitution to allow Museveni to run another term, the outcome of the referendum will determine whether Uganda will change its political system to allow parties to operate legally. While Movement leadership continues to publicly support multi-party rule, there is still considerable uncertainty about how these political developments will impact the transition process. In designing and implementing the program, NDI staff follow two guiding principles: strive to develop activities which focus on imparting practical skills in the Uganda context and maintain a flexible programming philosophy to respond to a rapidly changing political situation.

III. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Program Management and Administration

During this reporting period, the Institute accomplished all of the program management and administrative activities necessary to open the Kampala office. These activities included: developing and submitting the Institute's workplan for approval to USAID; procuring a vehicle for the use of the NDI staff in Uganda; hiring one local program officer; leasing office space; and acquiring office equipment and furniture. Given that the Institute did not initially anticipate the need to secure separate office space in Kampala, it became necessary to devote a larger percentage of staff time to office set-up and procurement of equipment than originally planned. However, despite this challenge, the Institute has also managed to commence the implementation of several of the program components.

NDI also participated in a number of meetings with USAID; CEPPS partners, the International Republican Institute (IRI) and IFES; as well as the Donor Democracy and

Governance Group (DDDG). NDI staff participates in monthly meetings with USAID, IRI and IFES in addition to meeting with the Embassy on a monthly basis. The purpose of the meetings is to discuss political developments, coordinate activities, and ensure that programming is on track to meet the intended program objectives.

Parliamentary Caucus Development

NDI held several one-on-one meetings with members of the parliamentary caucuses to gauge the level of interest in the program as well as to begin initial discussions on the potential roundtable topics. Additionally, through these meetings the Institute has begun to identify external communication channels that are available to the MPs to communicate with both their constituencies and with their party leadership. Moreover, in an effort to strengthen the caucus member's ability to communicate with the electorate, NDI began developing a list of existing external communication mechanisms available to the caucus members.

Increasing Women's Political Participation

In collaboration with the Electoral Support Unit of the DDDG, the Institute coordinated a strategy session with CSOs that conduct programming to increase women's political participation and women MPs, which was held in Kampala at The Grand Imperial Hotel on June 6. The workshop brought civic groups together to begin discussing the necessary components of developing a strategy to increase women's political participation beyond the recommendations that the organizations had previously made, and that would be equally applicable to women interested in local politics as it would to women interested in pursuing parliamentary seats. Approximately eight organizations and three women MPs participated in the workshop. During the workshop, NDI staff presented on existing recommendations to increase women's participation, the Institute's "Win with Women"¹ initiative as well as international case studies on how women had increased their candidacy potential by specifically reaching out to the female electorate.

Based in part on information gained during the workshop, as well as pre-existing relationships with women's organizations and MPs, the Institute began gathering information that will be reflected in a strategy document produced jointly by NDI and Ugandan women's organizations. The Institute has also assembled documents from previous programs in Uganda aimed at increasing women's participation to incorporate into the strategy document.

The Institute also began the planning process for a series of candidate training-of-trainers workshops, including identifying organizations that will be invited to attend the workshop series and contracting a consultant to develop a training manual. NDI is working collaboratively with the consultant on the development of the training manual. In an effort to increase local ownership of the manual, the Institute has gathered training journals that have previously been

¹ The Win with Women Initiative, launched in December 2003 by the National Democratic Institute Chairman Madeleine K. Albright, is a movement to promote women's political participation worldwide. The anchor of this initiative is the Global Action Plan: a document that outlines practical recommendations that will help political parties broaden their appeal by becoming more inclusive and representative. Learn more about the Win with Women Global Initiative by visiting the website at <http://winwithwomen.ndi.org/>.

produced by women's organizations in Uganda and will incorporate portions of these documents into the training manual.

CSO Assessment

NDI conducted an initial stocktaking exercise in anticipation of the commencement of the assessment mission that will focus on examining the capacity of civil society organizations to conduct electoral programs, including domestic monitoring of the 2006 elections. The assessment will result in a report, which will assist the Institute in providing assistance to civil society in the lead up to the elections. Based on the terms of reference the Institute developed, two individuals with international functional experience in domestic election monitoring, women's political participation and civic education were identified to participate as part of the assessment team. The assessment team arrived in Kampala on June 27 and will remain in-country for two weeks to conduct meetings and produce a draft report. A trip to Gulu in northern Uganda has been included in the team's agenda to allow for an opportunity to meet with organizations in the north, and in an effort to include programming for internally displaced persons (IDPs) into the Institute's recommendations.

IV. RESULTS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Objective: To support the development of parliamentary caucuses and strengthen their ability to present issues to parliament and the electorate.

Although NDI does not yet have specific accomplishments to report under this objective, the Institute made progress toward the achievement of this objective by strengthening existing relationships with members of the parliamentary caucuses through individual meetings on roundtable discussion topics and by developing a list of external communication channels available to MPs. Maintaining these relationships are critical to the realization of the objectives of the program.

Objective: To encourage women's participation at all stages of the electoral process and develop their skills as candidates.

NDI has begun promoting and encouraging the involvement of women in the electoral process by identifying women leaders and civic groups and supporting dialogue between all actors on the development of a strategy document on increasing women's political participation.

NDI's value added has been to encourage the groups to draw on international examples; to discuss and streamline previous recommendations that had been developed and; to support a process to examine the relevance of prior recommendations to the current pre-election environment in Uganda. As a result of this process, NDI anticipates that the strategy document will draw on a variety of perspectives, will be inclusive and will result in a collaborative strategy document that maximizes the work that has been completed on women's political participation by a variety of actors.

Objective: To assess and strengthen Ugandan CSOs' capacity to conduct election monitoring.

NDI made progress toward assessing CSO capacity to conduct election monitoring by: assembling an international assessment team with complementary functional experience in election monitoring, women's political participation and civic education; holding initial conversations with CSOs and; conducting a brief stocktaking exercise that preceded the assessment. These activities encouraged the leaders of CSOs and their staff to reflect on the role that Ugandan CSOs can play during the pre-election period. NDI also made important progress toward the accomplishment of this objective by strengthening its relationship with existing civil society organizations as evidenced by the groups' and individuals' willingness and enthusiasm to meet with NDI staff and the Institute's assessment team. Specific accomplishments in this area will be realized during the next quarter when the assessment report will become available.

Objective: Assist CSOs to broaden citizen participation in anticipation of the elections.

NDI has not yet supported civic groups in their efforts to broaden civic participation, but anticipates selecting its local partners and issuing subgrant for civic and voter education activities during the next quarter.

V. EVALUATION

The Institute's Uganda program is on track to meet its objectives. NDI has successfully been able to accomplish all of the planned activities on its workplan for the reporting period, and anticipates that the Institute's workplan will not require any adjustment in the upcoming quarter.

VI. FUTURE ACTIVITIES

In the next quarter, the Institute plans to begin conducting parliamentary caucus roundtables as well as to finalize the strategy document for increasing women's political participation. NDI will continue to identify external communication channels available to the parliamentary caucuses, as well as to identify a trainer to facilitate issue roundtables and follow-on external communication workshops. Additionally, in the upcoming quarter the assessment of civil society capacity will be concluded and the report will be finalized. The Institute plans to begin soliciting proposals for its subgrants program for both the women's candidate and the civic/voter education components.